

NET SCORING SYSTEM

FIELD OF INVENTION

The present invention relates to a scoring system for use in sports activities. In particular, the present invention pertains to a net scoring system that can be used to accurately maintain the score of a sports contest, can be easily transported with a game net and can be used in a variety of sports activities at a variety of locations.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

A portable game net is a useful piece of sporting equipment to own. Because sports enthusiasts can use game nets for a variety of sports activities, such as volleyball and badminton, game nets have become increasingly popular in recent years. Players may hang game nets between two fixed vertical structures, such as poles or trees, at varying heights above the ground, depending on the sports activity being played. As such, game nets are useful in backyards, over swimming pools, or any variety of playing surfaces where sports activities are played.

In playing sporting events using a game net, even the most casual player often desires to keep score of the contest. In many instances, this is achieved by each player simply keeping track of the score in his or her head. Because this method of scoring does not include a visual representation of the current score, however, it often leads to inaccurate scoring and requires each player to continually remember the current score and state it aloud so that all participants are informed. Scoreboards are often used at high school, college or professional sporting events, but are often too large, complex and stationary to be used in the variety of sporting venues where game nets are used by recreational players. Therefore, what is needed is a simple scoring system that a player can easily transport with a game net and use in a variety of sports activities at various game-playing locations.

The prior art has attempted to provide scoring systems. For example, U.S. Patent No. 5,489,122 to Pittner discloses a personal tennis score keeper. U.S. Patent No. 5,385,113 to Hierath

discloses a tennis score keeper and display device. U.S. Patent No. 5,294,913 to Mower et al. discloses an indoor/outdoor portable basketball scoreboard and U.S. Patent No. 5,025,748 to Pettis teaches a portable scoring device. The designs of many of these devices are complex and require the players to transport equipment in addition to the game net. In addition, many of these scoring devices are not useful in physical locations where sporting activities using game nets are often played. Accordingly, there remains a need for a simple scoring system that a player can easily transport with a game net and use in a variety of sports activities at various game-playing locations.

The present invention answers the need for such a scoring system. The design of the present invention enables players to easily and accurately maintain the score of a sporting contest. In addition, because the present invention includes a game net, it can be conveniently transported without requiring additional equipment. Moreover, the present invention can be used in a variety of sports activities and at various game-playing locations.

OBJECTS OF THE INVENTION

It is an object of the present invention to provide a simple means for accurately keeping score of the number of points won during a sports activity that includes a game net.

It is another object of the present invention to provide a simple means for accurately keeping score of the number of games won during a sports activity that includes a game net.

It is still another object of the present invention to provide an easily visible indication of the score of a sports activity that includes a game net.

It is yet another object of the present invention to provide a team with a visible indication of their score and their opponent's score in a sports activity that includes a game net.

It is another object of the present invention to provide a means for keeping score that can be easily transported with a game net.

It is still another object of the present invention to provide a net scoring system that can be used in a variety of sports activities.

It is another object of the present invention to provide a net scoring system that can be used at a variety of game playing locations.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

5 The present invention is directed to a net scoring system. The net scoring system has a game net which is of a generally rectangular shape and has a periphery defined by a top edge, a bottom edge, and opposing side edges. The game net also has a front face and a back face. The net scoring system also includes at least one indicating device for displaying a game score that is connected to the game net. The indicating device may be located on at least one of the top edge, the bottom edge, and the opposing side edges. Furthermore, the indicating device may be located on at least one of the front face and the back face of the game net.

10 In accordance with the present invention, the net scoring system may have a reinforcing tape that is attached to the top edge, the bottom edge, and the opposing side edges of the game net. Moreover, at least one indicating device having a plurality of scoring symbols may be located on the reinforcing tape. Furthermore, at least one indicating device may have a symbol indicating assembly for emphasizing one of the plurality of scoring symbols to represent a score.

15 In accordance with the present invention, the symbol indicating assembly may have a planar surface having portions defining a void through which one of the plurality of scoring symbols may be made visible. Furthermore, the symbol indicating assembly may have a fastening device that extends from the planar surface for slidably attaching the symbol indicating assembly to the reinforcing tape.

20 The present invention is also directed to a net scoring system having a plurality of scoring symbols located on both the front face and the back face of the game net, such that the symbol indicating assembly is capable of emphasizing the same symbol on both the front face and the back face of the game net.

25 In accordance with the present invention, the symbol indicating assembly may include a first planar surface having portions defining a void through which one of the plurality of scoring symbols

located on the front face of the game net may be made visible. The symbol indicating assembly may include a second planar surface having portions defining a void through which one of the plurality of scoring symbols located on the back face of the game net may be made visible. The first planar surface is connected to the second planar surface such that the symbol indicating assembly is slidably attached to the reinforcing tape.

The indicating device according to the present invention may include an LCD display. The LCD display includes a processing device for adding a point to the current score and a processing device for resetting the current score to zero.

In accordance with the present invention, at least one indicating device may include a plate having a flat planar surface. The flat planar surface is formed to include at least one slot. A plurality of scoring symbols are located on the plate. At least one symbol indicating assembly is slidably attached to the plate through the slot. The plate according to the present invention may be fixedly attached to the reinforcing tape.

The present invention is also directed to a method of indicating the score of a sporting contest. The steps of the method may include providing a game net that includes at least one scoring symbol located on the game net, and at least one symbol indicating assembly connected to the game net. The steps of the method may also include selectively sliding at least one symbol indicating assembly over at least one scoring symbol to indicate the current score.

It is to be understood that both the foregoing general description and the following detailed description are exemplary and explanatory only, and are not restrictive of the invention as claimed. The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated herein by reference, and which constitute a part of the specification, illustrate certain embodiments of the invention, and together with the detailed description, serve to explain the principles of the present invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention will now be described in conjunction with the following drawings in which like reference numerals designate like elements and wherein:

Fig. 1 is a front view of the net scoring system in accordance with the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a front view of the indicating device of Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 is a schematic view of the symbol indicating assembly of Fig. 1;

Fig. 4 is a side view of the symbol indicating assembly according to another embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 5 is a front view of the indicating device according to another embodiment of the present invention; and

Fig. 6 is a front view of the indicating device according to another embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Reference will now be made in detail to a game net **10** and at least one indicating device **20** of the present invention, an example of which is illustrated in Fig. 1. The game net **10** is defined by a generally rectangular periphery which includes a top edge **11**, a bottom edge **12**, and two opposing side edges **13**. The game net **10** has a front face **101** and a back face **102** (as shown in Fig. 4). With reference to Fig. 1, a mesh fabric **14** extends across the area defined by the periphery of the game net **10**. A reinforcing tape **110** is attached to the top edge **11**, the bottom edge **12**, and the two opposing side edges **13**.

It is contemplated that the game net **10** may include reinforcing rods **15** which are inserted through a longitudinal opening within the reinforcing tape **110**. The game net **10** can be extended between two fixed structures, such as poles or trees (not shown), and secured to them using an appropriate hanging means **16**, such as, for example, a nylon cord. It is also contemplated that the game net **10** may include a locking assembly **17** for further securing the game net **10** to the fixed structures.

It is further contemplated that the present invention may be hung at various heights above the ground to be used for a wide variety of sports activities, including but not limited to, volleyball, badminton, tennis, and various swimming pool games. It is also contemplated that the present

invention may be used in a wide variety of locations, including but not limited to, backyards, beaches, parks, gymnasiums and over swimming pools.

In one embodiment of the present invention, as shown in Fig. 2, the at least one indicating device **20** for indicating the current score **201** of one of the teams is positioned on the reinforcing tape **110** attached to the bottom edge **12** of the game net **10**. The indicating device **20** includes a plurality of scoring symbols **21** connected to the reinforcing tape **110**. By way of example, the plurality of scoring symbols **21** could be a numeric range from zero (0) through fifteen (15), which is the range of scores for a typical volleyball game. Other numeric or symbolic ranges, however, are considered to be well within the scope of the present invention. In the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the plurality of scoring symbols **21** are printed on the reinforcing tape **110** of the game net **10**. However, it is contemplated that the plurality of scoring symbols **21** may be connected to the game net **10** in other ways, such as, for example, embroidering the symbols or using decals. Because the present invention includes both the game net **10** and the indicating device **20**, it allows a player to easily transport a scoring system without additional equipment.

The indicating device **20** also includes symbol indicating assembly **30** used to represent the current score **201** of one of the teams. The symbol indicating assembly **30** is slidably attached to reinforcing tape **110**. In one embodiment, as shown in Fig. 3, the symbol indicating assembly **30** includes a planar surface **31**, a void **32** through which one of the plurality of scoring symbols **21** (the current score **201**) is visible, and a fastening assembly **33** extending from the planar surface **31** for slidably attaching to reinforcing tape **110**. This provides players with an easily visible indication of the score of their sports activity. Other embodiments of the symbol indicating assembly **30** are considered within the scope of the present invention, including but not limited to, an assembly having a pointer to indicate the score. Moreover, it is contemplated that the symbol indicating assembly **30** may be constructed from plastic, metal, or any other appropriate material.

In another embodiment of the present invention, two indicating means **20** are positioned on both the front face **101** and the back face **102** of the game net **10**, such that on each face, one indicating means **20** is located closer to one of the side edges **13** and the other indicating means **20**

is located closer to the other of the side edges 13. In this manner, on each face of the game net 10, one indicating means 20 is for representing that team's score and one indicating means 20 is used to represent their opponent's score. Furthermore, a plurality of scoring symbols 21 are positioned on both the front face 101 and the back face 102 of the game net 10, such that each symbol indicating assembly 30 is capable of emphasizing the same one of the plurality of scoring symbols 21 on both the front face 101 and the back face 102 of the game net 10. Thus, when one team adjusts its score on one side of game net 10, their opponent on the other side of game net 10 sees the score adjusted as well. This enables each team to easily, accurately, and visually determine both their score and their opponent's score at all times. It is contemplated that the plurality of scoring symbols 21 could be printed such that the score for the two different teams are printed in different colors to further facilitate the determination of each team's score.

In this embodiment, as shown in Fig. 4, the symbol indicating assembly 30 includes a first planar surface 31, a void 32 through which one of the plurality of scoring symbols 21 is visible on one side of game net 10, a second planar surface 34, and a void 35 through which one of the plurality of scoring symbols 21 is visible on the other side of game net 10. Planar surface 31 is connected to planar surface 34 by a connecting member 36, such that each surface is pulled slightly toward the other. This enables the symbol indicating assembly 30 to be slidably attached to the reinforcing tape 110.

It is contemplated by the present invention that at least one indicating device 20 may be used for indicating the number of games won by a team. In this manner, additional scoring symbols 21 may be added to represent the score in games. Also, at least one additional symbol indicating assembly 30 may be added to represent the current number of games won by a team.

In another embodiment of the present invention, the indicating device 20 includes a flat plate 40, as shown in Fig. 5. The plate 40 includes at least one slot 41 formed therein and has a plurality of scoring symbols 21 printed on plate 40. Symbol indicating assembly 42 is slidably attached to the plate 40 through at least one slot 41. Symbol indicating assembly 42 has a planar surface 43 and a void 44 through which one of the plurality of scoring symbols 21 is visible, representing the current

score. The indicating device **20** of this embodiment may be connected to the game net **10** or it is contemplated that the indicating device **20** may be connected to a fixed structure, such as a pole.

In yet another embodiment of the present invention, the indicating device **20** include an LCD display **50**, as shown in Fig. 6. The LCD display **50** is connected to the game net **10**. The LCD display **50** includes a score button **51** for adding a point to the current score and a reset button **52** for returning the current score to zero.

Although this invention has been described in conjunction with specific embodiments thereof, it is evident that many alternatives, modifications and variations will be apparent to those skilled in the art. Accordingly, the preferred embodiments of the invention as set forth herein are intended to be illustrative, not limiting. Various changes may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as defined in the following claims.